# NDP gang of 11 blasts 'drifting' Rae leadership

By Kelly Toughill
TORONTO STAR

A coalition of prominent New Democrats has blasted Premier Bob Rae's policies, saying the Ontario government is "drifting" and has gone "against the deepest traditions of our party."

A sharply worded letter signed by 11 members, including three MPPs, accuses the government of betraying its own party and warns of "electoral disaster" unless the trend is reversed.

"Our efforts to appease corporate interests have failed," it reads.

"We are losing support from our natural constituencies ... We are carrying out cutbacks to social services, student assistance and medical care that we were elected to oppose.

"These are not happy times for New Democrats in Ontario."

Sent to more than 700 party members, it urges them to attend an upcoming council meeting to press for a reversal of the government's over-all direction.

The letter is signed by MPPs Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold), Dennis Drainville (Victoria-Haliburton) and Mark Morrow (Wentworth East) as well as Lennox Farrell, one of Rae's key advisers on anti-racism issues, and Michael Shapcott, of Metro's Social Planning Council.

The other signatories are Rosalyn Hazelle, a black activist who is running for the federal NDP nomination in the riding of Brampton South; Lois Bedard and Gord Doctorow, co-chairs of a leftist caucus in the party; Bill Dwyer, co-chair of the party's gay and lesbian committee, and Nick Marchese, an executive of the Dovercourt riding association.

Party president Julie Davis said yesterday she hasn't seen the letter, but isn't surprised to hear of it.

"It's in line with what a lot of those people have said before," she said after being read excerpts over the phone. "We have a healthy tradition in the NDP of dissent."

Davis said she disagrees with the group, and believes that "the majority of members" will disagree with them also.

"Given the difficult financial situation, (the government) has not done a bad job of balancing."

The letter signals the first coordinated assault against Rae's leadership from within his own party.

It also comes in the wake of a move by party members to block the nomination of a candidate in the St. George-St. David byelection until the government agrees to beef up legal rights for gay and lesbian spouses.

"It's no coincidence this letter is very strong," said Kormos, who has already jousted with Rae over the government's reversal on publicly funded auto insurance.

"This letter was very carefully worded. I say it's about time."

Party member Harry Kopyto, who is leading the assault, said people were eager to sign his manifesto.

"There is profound dismay with the direction of this government," he said.

Toronto Sun

3 NDP MPPS BACK LETTER

# Rae laughs off attack on gov't

By ANITA ELASH
Queen's Park Bureau

Premier Bob Rae yesterday laughed off a written attack on his government by 11 prominent New Democrats.

Asked by reporters about the letter signed by three MPPs, Rae at first chuckled, then laughed and finally fired a personal shot at the letter's author, disbarred lawyer Harry Kopyto.

"Have you ever met Harry Kopyto?" Rae asked.

"I don't think I've done anything in the last 16 years that Harry Kopyto has ever agreed with. Me and about 12 million other people."

But Rae also denied he faces serious dissent within NDP ranks, despite the fact the stinging letter outlines party members' displeasure with his government.

## Vote 'disaster'

Kopyto's letter, sent to more than 700 party members, was endorsed by 10 other prominent New Democrats, including MPPs Peter Kormos, Dennis Drainville and Mark Morrow.

It says the government is "drifting" away from longstanding party policy and predicts "electoral disaster" unless changes are made.

Kopyto said yesterday party members are unhappy with the government's about-face on several issues, including public auto insurance, casinos, cutbacks to social services and student aid and legally recognizing same-sex relationships.

## Firm issues cereals alert

Kraft General Foods

Feb 27/93

# Rae laughs off NDP rebuke

By Derek Ferguson
TORONTO STAR

Premier Bob Rae has laughed off a stinging public rebuke of his government by a coalition of prominent New Democrats.

NDP party member Harry Kopyto and 10 other party members — including three MPPs — put their signatures to an open letter denouncing Rae's government for "drifting" and going "against the deepest traditions of our party."

"Have you ever met Harry Kopyto?" Rae laughingly asked reporters seeking his response to the open letter at Queen's Park yesterday.

"I don't think I've done anything the last 15 years that Harry Kopyto's ever agreed with. Me, and about 12 million other people."

The letter, which warns of "electoral disaster" unless the trend is reversed, was sent to 700 party members.

It urges them to attend an upcoming council meeting to press for a reversal of the government's over-all direction.

The letter is signed by backbench MPPs Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold), Dennis Drainville (Victoria-Haliburton) and Mark Morrow (Wentworth East).

Other signatories include Lennox Farrell, one of Rae's key advisers on anti-racism issues; Michael Shapcott, of Metro's Social Planning Council; Rosalyn Hazelle, a black activist who is running for the federal NDP nomination in the riding of Brampton South; Lois Bedard and Gord Doctorow, co-chairs of a leftist caucus in the party; Bill Dwyer, co-chair of the party's gay and lesbian committee; and Nick Marchese, an executive of the Dovercourt riding association.

Of the three MPPs' support for the critique, Rae replied: "I can't explain that. Better ask them."

But when pressed by reporters to react to the dissent, the premier shrugged it off as "natural."

"Let's put this in a bit of perspective," he said. "There are a group of people who are always going to be unhappy with various things that happen. I think if you have a sense of the history of things, that can be pretty clearly shown.

"We've had to govern in some of the toughest times that any government's had to govern. I'm very proud of our record."

# Anti-Rae letter forces others to back Premier

## Presidents of CAW, NDP distance selves from Kopyto-authored attack

BY RICHARD MACKIE
Queen's Park Bureau

TORONTO — A letter challenging Premier Bob Rae's leadership has apparently backfired by forcing some potential dissidents to praise the Premier rather than side with the fringe group attacking him.

Canadian Auto Workers president Buzz Hargrove, who launched a damaging internal attack against the Rae government last December, was quick to dissociate himself from the letter's authors, who had tried to implicate him in their campaign. He said his differences with the government had been recently resolved.

Julie Davis, president of the Ontario New Democratic Party, has admitted in the past to misgivings about the government's inability to keep its promises on social programs. But Friday she strongly supported the government's actions.

Mr. Rae himself laughed off the letter to Ontario New Democrats, which carried the names of 11 party members, some of whom are persistent critics. The letter was written by Harry Kopyto, who has made a career of attacking the establishment.

"Have you ever met Harry Kopyto?" he asked reporters who suggested the letter could be a signal that he faces a serious challenge. "I don't think I've done anything in the last 15 years that Harry Kopyto has ever agreed with Me and about 12 million other people.

"It's not news that Mr. Kopyto and his friends are critical. It's natural. What's surprising is that it's taken him 2½ years to complain about our government."

In addition to Mr. Kopyto, the letter carries the names of three New Democrat MPPs who have become established as critics of the Rae government. They are Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold) and Mark Morrow (Wentworth East), both of whom broke with the government over auto insurance, and Dennis Drainville (Victoria-Haliburton) who opposes the government's plans to legalize casino gambling.

Mr. Drainville's effectiveness as an opponent has been limited by the revelation that he has lobbied to obtain a casino for his riding if such gambling is legalized.

Other names on the letter include those of Lois Bedard and Gord Doctorow of the Ontario Left Caucus of the NDP, Lennox Farrell, a member of the provincial party executive, and Bill Dwyer, co-chairman of the lesbian, gay and bisexual committee of the St. George-St. David riding executive. This committee has been trying to use the approaching April 1 by-election in the riding to force the government to strengthen legal rights for gay and lesbian spouses. Two weeks ago it blocked the nomination of an NDP candidate in the riding until the government acts.

The letter that caused the controversy complains that the government is drifting because it is trying to appease corporate interests. "We are losing support from our natural constituencies and labour supporters," it says.

The letter suggests that Mr. Hargrove's attack on the government last Dec. 11 could be used to put the government back on course.

At the time, Mr. Hargrove said the government had tried "to diffuse the criticism of the corporate world by more and more talking the language of the Business Council on National Issues and the language of the right-wing government in Ottawa."

In an interview Friday, Mr. Hargrove quickly denied any link to the letter and added that he had refused to sign it. He said Mr. Kopyto had not sought his permission to suggest that Mr. Hargrove could lead the attack on so-called "government drift."

Since delivering the Dec. 11 speech, Mr. Hargrove said, he has been reconciled with the government because of Mr. Rae's plans to oppose the North American free-trade agreement with public hearings on the pact. He also praised the government's plans to invest up to $6-billion over the next 10 years in capital-works projects.

"People can see that we're not all caught up in the cutback mentality" of the federal Progressive Conservative government, he said.

# *An Appeal . . .*

Dear fellow New Democrats,

March, 1993

The NDP Government in Ontario is drifting. Our efforts to appease corporate interests have failed. We are losing support from our natural constituencies and labour supporters. We are carrying out cutbacks to social services, student assistance and medical care that we were elected to oppose. The government has hesitated to give legal recognition to same sex relationships and appears to have shelved a timely implementation of employment and pay equity. We have taken positions, including dumping public auto insurance and instituting casinos, that go against the deepest traditions of our Party. Some even doubt the willingness of the Government to fight the limits that free trade is imposing on provincial laws. The voters are becoming cynical. Our membership is becoming demoralized. Electoral disaster looms on the horizon.

What should be done? Before anything else, there is an urgent need to open up the Party to a broad discussion on the future of the Government as it moves into the second half of its term of office. Such a discussion should involve the membership through the ridings and Provincial Council. It should focus on how to bring the Government back on course, defend our program and ensure accountability. The clash of ideas in such a discussion will generate useful proposals to invigorate the Party and prepare it for the future.

The Provincial Council will be meeting on March 27 and March 28 in Toronto. It offers an opportunity to begin such a discussion. The St. George-St. Patrick Riding Association has passed a resolution asking the Provincial Council Executive to invite the President of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), Buzz Hargrove, to address the Council meeting. The CAW National Council approved a Report filed by Hargrove last December analyzing the direction that the NDP should take. His participation in a panel discussion at the next Council meeting, along with others from the social movements, the academic community, the Government and other unions, could launch the exchange of views needed to steer the Government back on course.

These are not happy times for New Democrats in Ontario. We have to stop being defensive about our politics and fearful of mobilizing our base, including the labour movement, in defence of the program we were elected to implement and the social forces that elected us to defend them in these recessionary times. Your presence at the Council meeting and your support for our proposal can help revitalize the Party, mobilize its rank and file and give the Government the support and encouragement it needs to stand firm on its platform. The time to act is now.

Sincerely,

Lois Bedard and Gord Doctorow,
Co-chairs, Ontario Left Caucus
of the NDP

Bill Dwyer,
St. George-St. David
Riding Executive
Co-chair, Lesbian, Gay and
Bisexual Committee

Harry Kopyto,
Provincial Council Alternate,
St. Andrew-St. Patrick

Nick Marchese,
Dovercourt Riding Executive
Executive Member,
City of Toronto NDP

Dennis Drainville, MPP
Victoria-Haliburton

Lennox Farrell,
Provincial Executive, ONDP

Peter Kormos, MPP
Welland-Thorold

Mark Morrow, MPP
Wentworth East

Michael Shapcott
Social Planning Council
of Metro Toronto

Organizations for identification purposes only.

For further information, call (416) 322-1664.

-1993-

# C E N S O R E D!

The Appeal on the other side of this leaflet was banned from the mailing to Provincial Council delegates this March. The decision, taken by Jill Marzetti, Secretary of the ONDP, was made for various reasons.

First, the Appeal was rejected as merely a statement of "11 disaffected individual members" rather than a publication of a structured group like the Left Caucus. **But the banned statement was a pressing appeal from New Democrats in prominent positions (including three MPPs) involved in a critical discussion about the current path of the Government. How was the Party's interest served by censoring a leaflet calling for a discussion on the Party's direction in the midst of major dissent within the labour movement and among many NDP activists? The decision shows a lack of sensitivity by denying delegates notice of an important call in the context of a developing crisis in the Party.**

Second, Jill Marzetti treated the motion of the St. George-St. David riding for a discussion at Provincial Council, which the Appeal was designed to support, as an administrative request rather than a resolution to be debated by Council. Therefore the leaflet was irrelevant. **The resolution, however, was made in good faith to the Provincial Executive with the intent that Council would decide the issue. It was a political, not an administrative motion.**

Third, Marzetti stated that there were "more appropriate ways" of expressing the concerns in the Appeal, such as raising the matter in the discussion period following the presentation by the Leader at Council. **This argument attempts to justify cutting off communications from the Party's base to the Provincial Council in the context of widespread disaffection in the Party. This decision threatens internal Party democracy and the exchange of views so vital to keeping the Party on course.**

Fourth, Marzetti stated that the discussion called for in the Appeal already took place at the December Provincial Council meeting when Bob Rae fielded critical questions from Party members and "got the message". The Party should now wait to see how the Government will respond. **There is, unfortunately, little evidence that Bob Rae got the message. CAW President Hargrove's criticism of the Rae Government after the December Council meeting is strong evidence that Rae was still not paying attention. Suppression of discussion will create inertia within the Party and aggravate the confusion and disarray developing within it.**

Fifth, Marzetti stated that the delegates might think that the Provincial Executive supported the Appeal if it were included in the mailing. **The Appeal is simple and straightforward coming from its signatories and no one else. Why was this objection not raised before when circulars were mailed critical of the Government's position on accountability, for example?**

Sixth, the Provincial Executive disagreed with the Appeal. **Why is their view relevant? Does the Executive censor mailings that don't coincide with its views? Its duty must surely be to facilitate and not obstruct communications between members, including legitimate dissent.**

Seventh, Marzetti stated that there will be no time to hold the discussion called for because Audrey McLaughlin and federal candidates have been invited to appear at Council. **Doesn't Provincial Council decide its own agenda? Shouldn't the delegates at Council decide whether there is enough time to hold the discussion or whether it should be held at a future Council meeting?**

**These are not ordinary times for the NDP. One riding association has rejected supporting an NDP candidate in the by-election while the biggest local of the Canadian Auto Workers couldn't mobilize enough NDPers to support ongoing affiliation with the Party. The Party should try to pull together through an exchange of views to clarify the issues. Ignoring dissent will not solve the problem. By holding a full discussion, painful as it may be, we can begin to reestablish a common perspective for defending and advancing the Party's policies. Banning the Appeal from the mailing is not only an act of censorship that violates fundamental precepts of democracy, but harms the Party by preventing the sorely needed debate to take place.**

**We believe that the Provincial Secretary overstepped the bounds of her authority in censoring the leaflet. We ask you to register your protest at the Council meeting.**

# *Unionists and the Crisis in the NDP*

March, 1993

Dear fellow New Democrats:

We are active New Democrats who have supported the struggle to see that the NDP exists to express the interests of the labour movement. Working people have financed the NDP, have canvassed to get it elected and have stood in its defence when it has been attacked by the business media.

Lately however, the NDP Government in Ontario has failed to fulfill the aspirations of the labour movement. It has supported cutbacks in health, welfare and educational assistance. It has failed to confront the corporate agenda which has caused massive numbers of unionized industrial jobs to disappear. It is even slashing thousands of jobs in the public sector.

The result has been alarm and disorientation, both inside the labour movement and in the NDP. The decision of CAW local 222 in Oshawa to disaffiliate from the NDP is symptomatic of the sense of alienation from the NDP in the union movement. The decision of the St. George-St. David NDP riding not to support an NDP candidate in the upcoming by-election is symptomatic of the crisis within the NDP. As CAW President Buzz Hargrove has stated, "Activists in the NDP are frustrated as hell. It is hard to get them riled up to fight back."

We believe that the time has come for a new relationship between the labour movement and the NDP. Such a relationship must be constructed on the basis of the legitimate right of labour to intervene within the NDP as a social force. We believe that the labour movement has the right, if not the duty, to rectify the course this Government is taking. It is apparent that the summit meetings between top labour leaders and the NDP Government is not sufficient.

The Appeal enclosed with this covering letter shows that there are forces, small but growing, that want to get the NDP back in touch with its roots, to stop giving in to the pressures from business interests and to assert the interests of working people.

But we cannot carry on this battle alone. We need the active involvement of the labour movement in the NDP to assert its demands and to mobilize behind them. Trade unionists know how to unite their forces in a strike situation and to get the membership involved. The challenge is to do the same thing in the NDP. Join the ridings. Come to Council--you are entitled to representation as an NDP affiliated-union. Send your delegates! Help to end the unprecedented rupture between labour and the NDP. Make sure that labour retains a strong political voice now, when we need it most.

G. Doctorow Lois Bédard

Gord Doctorow and Lois Bedard
Co-Chairpersons, Left Caucus of the
Ontario New Democratic Party

PLEASE POST, CIRCULATE AND REPORT

whole, and there was little support if any for outright confrontation or rejection such as the actions of St.George-St. David riding in refusing to support the NDP candidate.

On the other hand, this defensive attitude was balanced by a greater openness and willingness to criticize or accept criticism of the leadership and more expressions of concern about the legitimacy of the Government's rationales than in the past. Some comments were repeated frequently - "We elected you, you're not listening." Sharp criticisms of Rae, even personal ones suggesting arrogance, were made without interruption This openness resulted in the passing of a motion challenging the Executive decision to prevent debate on the accountability resolution presenting by the St. George-St. David riding by a vote of 78 to 74 Saturday morning. It was further reflected in the decision not to amend the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Caucus's agenda to prioritize adherence to the ONDP's policies about Gay rights. It was also reflected in the sprinkling of delegates present from OPSEU, CUPE and the CAW, many of them young delegates and women delegates, who raised questions regarding the Party's positions on pay equity, labour issues, etc. Though few in number many of these delegates did not attend Council meetings in the past. Finally, some gay delegates confronted the Party's inaction on same-sex equality legislation and accountability issues.

The basic response of the leadership to this situation was primarily one of deflecting it and to only a minimal extent confronting it though preceding the meeting, pressures were exerted, with some success, on Appeal signatories to dissociate themselves. Threats from the union brass were made against one signatory as well as against a candidate for a vacancy on the Executive causing him to withdraw. The opposition to the accountability resolution was basically argued on technical grounds and discussion was cut off after one person spoke in its favour--a "perfunctory" discussion to quote The Globe and Mail. A lengthy presentation by Floyd Loughren on Saturday focusing on the deficit was designed basically to mollify and distract disaffection with the Party's drift to the right from Bob Rae.

Rae's intervention was a masterful, highly subtle justification for cutbacks and rollbacks which he attempted to justify by conjuring visions of a bankrupt province run by a government controlled by the IMF.

It was quite noteworthy however that Rae attempted to meet the greater concern within the Party by hypocritically raising the possibility that taxes would increase for the wealthy, a position that the Government has retreated from consistently, in order to generate support during his speech. This remark was greeted much more enthusiastically than his suggestion that the recession was over.

The leadership of the Party effectively prevented several discussions from taking place. The accountability resolution was defeated by a two-thirds majority after one person spoke in its favour. The resolutions that the Left Caucus had been seeking to promote--on the need for a broad discussion (the St. George resolution), on Drainville and disciplining MPPs were ruled "administrative" in nature and did not come up for consideration. Thus, by a combination of bureaucratic means (control of the agenda, calling the question from the floor, cutting off discussion at critical points) and a combination of speeches by Government leaders containing both deceitful and conciliatory signals, the expression of anger of the delegates was effectively neutralized.

Overhanging the Council Meeting was the awareness of a mass meeting and demonstration of 1,500 Bruce Station Nuclear workers scheduled for termination outside the hotel where Council was meeting. Their efforts to get Council to support retooling their Plant failed but still underlined the growing divisions in the Party and the inadequacy of Rae's policies.

If the control by the Party apparatus of the structures of the Council meeting prevented a full discussion from taking place and tended to feed into the Government leadership's hands, the broad concerns of the delegates were still apparent during the question periods of the Government leaders as well as during discussions. It was noted also in the fact that close to 40 persons attended the Left Caucus lunchtime meeting, the largest attendance at any of the Caucuses with which that meeting was competing including the regional caucuses, the environmental caucus, the labour caucus, etc., larger than our Caucus at Convention and larger than our public meetings featuring speakers. While the mood was not one of confronting Rae in the sense of challenging his leadership, it was one of questioning Rae, in terms of direction of policy in saying that he wasn't listening, in pointing out that you can't represent all the people all the time, in revulsion against crass manipulation with a right-wing video portrayal of the New Zealand labour Party's crisis over debt management.

It should be noted that though the Left Caucus held two meetings preceding the Provincial Council, though we tried to intervene as best as we could, we still ran into problems in our intervention on the floor. For example, two key Left Caucus spokespersons were able to appear as delegates only by good fortune and a little foresight. At two critical points, the Left Caucus had only one delegate on the floor. Without additional support in dealing with various issues that were arising, we unfortunately missed an opportunity to challenge the Executive on its omission of the St. George-St. David motion, calling for a discussion within the Party, from its report. Nonetheless, the Left emerged from the Council with a clear profile, a sense of legitimacy and acceptance in leadership of those forces that wanted to promote accountability and a discussion within the Party.

Intervention by the Left Caucus took on various forms. First of all, we intervened through the Left Caucus Newsletter which was widely distributed and equally widely read. We were also successful in distributing the Appeal calling for a discussion within the Party and referring to it in the discussion through delegates' intervention and discussions and through our meetings. We were able to make contacts with people in Oshawa, Oakville, St. Catharines, Orangeville, Concord, Windsor, London and Sackville in addition to Toronto. Interestingly, our meeting attracted critical people on the right of the Party as well as some Black delegates.

Our intervention centred largely around the need to open up the Party to a discussion and the need to maintain accountability. We intervened around demands to tax the wealthy, block government layoffs, maintain the character of the Party as a voice for labour and to move the Party left on economic programs.

There was a certain degree of interest in the Left and the alternatives that it posed and a general agreement with a need for the criticism of the NDP to be brought into the Party in the form of a structured discussion. It is apparent however,

(i) that while there is a general interest along these lines, not many forces are willing or able to commit themselves to actually building an open forum inside the NDP and promoting such a project in a consistent way over a period of time with the focusing of energy and priorities this requires;

(ii) it is apparent that such a forum, if advanced as a project for the Party to undertake rather than that of a group within the Party, is likely to run into many procedural impediments and bureaucratic diversions resulting from the control and manipulation of the Party apparatus by the leadership.

The only realistic alternative to taking on something bigger than we could handle, or a project in which success would be dubious, would be to focus the energies of those who want to promote such a discussion into an independent structure within the NDP. A decision was made by the Left Caucus to appoint four persons to organize a meeting of Left Caucus supporters interested in promoting such a project. Noon hour meeting

The Provincial Council meeting indicated that the Party was not immune to the social forces and conflicts outside it but that the reflection of these struggles were at a very early stage and could express themselves only in a distorted and fragmented way. It reflected the openness of the riding activists to support the idea of a discussion within the Party and the need to defend accountability. It reflected also the strong balance of forces in favour of the Government leadership and the political bureaucracy within the structures of the Party itself. Under these conditions the following is recommended as the focus of our own activities

until the June 19th and 20th Provincial Council Meeting:

(i) that we continue our efforts to try to organize a committee initiated by the Left Caucus to organize a structured discussion within the ridings and the Party in order to enable labour, the Left and the Party leadership itself, hopefully, to dialogue on the fundamental alternatives before the NDP. We must accept that any effort to force the Party to organize this discussion would be protracted and dissipate our weak forces;

(ii) that we would promote the idea that such a discussion should be centred around the alternative of socialism to adaptation to the corporate agenda;

(iii) that we will encourage ridings to pass resolutions calling for Provincial Council rules to be amended so that questions can only be called by a person at a mike, alternates should be allowed to replace delegates who give them the badges and similar resolutions, to democratize procedure at Council;

(iv) that we continue to focus Left Caucus energies on circulating the Newsletter, liquidating the printing debt and developing an internal life for the Caucus.

Forums for Socialist Alternatives in the NDP
Minutes, May 6, 1993, 8 p.m.
40 Homewood Avenue, #1501, Toronto

**Chairperson**

Andrew Breuer volunteered and was accepted to chair the meeting.

**Introductions**

There was an introductory go-round of persons in attendance.

**Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting of April 29, 1993, were adopted as amended.

It was agreed that draft minutes of meetings must be sent out to all committee members prior to the following meeting. Zane Boyd, acting as secretary for tonight's meeting, agreed to ensure this was done with this evening's meeting's minutes.

**General Political Discussion**

There was an exchange of views on the significance of this past week's events, namely, the continued widespread and vocal support for Steven Langdon's criticism of the Rae government from within the party (e.g., Rodriguez, Riche) and especially from labour (Bob White); the developing showdown between the public sector unions and an equally intransigeant Bob Rae; at the same, the standing ovations for Rae at the CAW Bargaining Conference and the united front presented to the media and opposition parties by Rae and the CAW leadership.

While there were differing assessments, there was general agreement that the crisis within the party and between the government and labour would not be shortlived and that it was important to continue to promote debate and organize opposition to Rae's policies within the party.

**Organizational Discussion**

Zane Boyd proposed that we drop the explicit term socialist from the actual titles of the first and third forums in order not to limit our audience the the narrower left in the party but rather to try to draw the entire party membership to the forums. After considerable discussion and debate, it was decided in the end to decide for now on the title of the first forum, as this is the one we need to have settled immediately. Lois Bedard moved, and it was second by Victor Grange, that the first forum be titled "Employment, the Debt, and the Alternatives". This motion passed

. . . /2

with one opposed and two abstentions.

Zane Boyd, who has stepped in to help get speakers lined up, reported that John Glenn had gotten OPSEU president Fred Upshaw's verbal agreement to speak sometime after the second week in June when he would be available. Meanwhile, Bob White was faxed an invitation to speak at the first forum following his open defence of Langdon and criticism of Rae this past Tuesday. Zane reported that Ben Pedersen, who couldn't make tonight's meeting, would be approaching Judy Darcy and Sid Ryan at a CUPE conference this weekend to appear at either the first or second forum. Willie Lambert indicated he would be approaching Buzz Hargrove tomorrow (Friday). Doris Gebhardt had yet to hear back from Judy Rebick whose office she had contacted to have Judy speak at the second forum on the social movements. Ann Emmett had likewise yet to hear back from Steven Langdon as to whether he could appear at the first forum. Zane Boyd indicated John Velleau was still waiting to hear from Mel Watkins on the first forum. Floyd Laughren had yet to be invited to the first forum and Tony Silipo to the second; Zane indicated they would be faxed an invitation tomorrow, Friday. Finally, Zane indicated that all speakers who had been or were being apprached verbally by committee members would be faxed invitations and the necessary information on our committee and the forums in writing, to ensure they had consistent and complete information before them.

Ann Emmett urged that we not wait, but rather decide on a date now, as people we want to appear were being lined up by other organizations to speak on the issue of the deficit and that we are in danger of being eclipsed. She reminded the meeting that economist John Hotson has agreed to speak at our forum on the debt. However, others argued that, because of the extremely tight and unpredictable schedules of the people we were approaching such as those above, it was impossible to determine the forum dates without first knowing when these various persons are available. There was no motion or vote coming out of this discussion.

Lois Bedard argued that, as the purpose of our committee was to organize a discussion on the Rae government's policies <u>within</u> the NDP, it was essential that persons involved ad hoc committee be members of the NDP. Lois urged those non-NDP members of our committee to join now and served notice that she would oppose participation of non-NDPers at future meetings.

Mike Demetro reported that 700 leaflets circulated in the name of the Labour Subcommittee of our committee (The NDP Labour Fightback Committee) at the May 1 protest against the Scarborough GM plant closure were well received in spite of some hassle from

*Presenting the SECOND of three forums*
*addressed to New Democrats, trade unionists and social activists*

# Cutbacks and NDP social policy

**Liz Barkley,** President, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

**Janet Maher,** National Action Committee on the Status of Women

**Amy Go,** President, Chinese Canadian National Council

**Michael Shapcott,** Housing and Anti-Poverty Activist

**An Ontario Government representative** has been invited.

## *Wednesday, June 16, 7:30 p.m.*
## *Faculty of Education Auditorium*
## *371 Bloor Street West, Toronto (at Spadina)*

***Admission by Donation***

***Our THIRD forum on 'IMPLEMENTING OUR PROGRAM IN POWER'***
***will take place SATURDAY, JUNE 26 at 2:00 p.m.***
***Toronto Board of Education Auditorium, 155 College St. (at McCaul)***

*(OVER)*

# For a full discussion in the NDP!

The Ontario government is in crisis! And so is the NDP. There is a growing rift between the government and labour as well as other social movements from which the Party has traditionally drawn its support. Within the Party itself -- widespread frustration and despair. Many feel the Party has betrayed its principles. Abandoned its character as a movement for social change. Some trade union locals and social activists even question their traditional support for the NDP.

Cutbacks to social services have been a central point of contention between the government and both labour and the extra-parliamentary social movements for social change. But so far, the debate has been largely confined to the Party, union and social movement leaders and has been presented in a confrontational and fragmented way by a hostile media.

Forums for Socialist Alternatives in the NDP has been formed to take this and other important discussions into the Party to be carried out in a structured and democratic way. NDPers, trade unionists and social activists need to become involved to redirect our Party and our Government.

Such a discussion must allow all views to be aired. It can envigorate the Party by posing solutions we can all rally behind. It can reaffirm our traditional unity with labour and the social movements. And it can restore our credibility as a popular alternative.

We are an ad hoc committee of New Democrats and trade unionists who believe that the membership -- the Party-builders -- should discuss and decide these critical issues. This discussion is not only legitimate but absolutely essential to defend our government and to carry out our program.

Help us publicize these forums. Get unions and other organizations involved within Party ridings, in the NDP Labour, Women's and other Party Caucuses, and at Provincial Council meetings.

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**We need your participation. And your financial help.**

Holding and publicizing these forums within the NDP and labour movement costs money. Lots of it. Send us a cheque -- whatever you, your union, or your organization can spare -- made out to "FORUMS FOR SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES IN THE NDP". And get involved with our committee.

NAME.....PHONE.....

ADDRESS.....POSTAL CODE.....

RIDING / UNION LOCAL / OTHER ORGANIZATION.....

**FORUMS FOR SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES IN THE NDP**
**Box 39, 552 Church Street, Toronto M4Y 2E3**
**tel: (416) 322-5247 or 661-8317 Fax: (416) 485-0019**

**Our organizational meetings are being held each Thursday in June at 8:00 p.m. at the Toronto Board of Education Building Cafeteria, 155 College Street (at McCaul).**

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# Take the Party Back

**Once upon a time**

The NDP campaigned on its program. We knocked on doors. We distributed leaflets. We spoke about issues that mattered. Public auto insurance. Rent control. An end to cutbacks of social services. Pay equity. Employment equity. No layoffs. Free tuition. Defending medicare. And we won!

**It wasn't going to be easy**

When we came to power, we knew it was going to be difficult. Hopes were high. Our victory raised expectations. But the recession was settling in. Times were getting tougher. We found less money in the public domain than we expected. Big business was orchestrating a campaign against us. We were new, we were learning, but above all, we knew who we were and where we wanted to go.

**We kept our eyes on the prize**

So, we did what we had to do. While Liberal and Tory governments across Canada slashed public jobs left, right and centre, we said "no way". While other governments hacked away at social services, we said "not us". While the corporate elite and their media supporters ranted on about debts and deficits, we adopted our first budget that held fast, that went against the stream, that put people first. We refused to be bullied.

When business mobilized against the Ontario Labour Reform Act, they fantasized of hundreds of thousands of jobs lost. They spent millions maligning our government. They demonstrated in the thousands at Queen's Park in their three-piece business suits. But we stood firm. We did what we promised. We stuck by our principles.

**On the way to the forum**

But then something happened. The barrage by big business, the threat of a capital strike, the media campaign finally took their toll. A cumulative effect. Our government allowed itself to become isolated. We didn't mobilize our supporters. We began to slip. To weaken. And we finally buckled.

The story is now well known. We dumped public auto insurance and with it our credibility as canvassers and activists. Then we gave up the ban on Sunday work--quite a feat for a labour-oriented Party. To top things off--casinos! The result? People stopped trusting us. Because they didn't know where we stood. Our popularity plummeted.

**Without a rudder**

Our government is now adapting more and more to the right and its agenda. Our obsession with the debt only bolsters the Tories and Liberals. They use our example to justify their own cutbacks. Our actions feed their campaign against working people in other provinces and at the federal and municipal levels.

We are eating our own, making a mockery of our traditions by instituting the very sort

# JOIN THE DISCUSSION!

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On Tuesday, May 25, at 7:30 p.m., a dialogue will begin to take place. Between the labour movement, NDP activists and the NDP Government, invited to attend.

This dialogue will be aimed at the Party itself. Not tailored for public consumption. Not mediated by a hostile press. But a frank discussion on the options the labour movement has in dealing with cutbacks and layoffs planned by the Government in Ontario.

Why should you be there? Because we **can** make the difference. Because only by fighting inside the NDP can we influence the tens of thousands of members of the Party who voted for policies that the Government now rejects. Because the NDP belongs to us, and through a full and democratic discussion, our ideas can win its members to our cause.

Our first forum, the first of three, will deal with "Employment, the Debt and the Alternatives." There will be a full opportunity for the audience, as well as the speakers, to discuss what the Government should be doing in Ontario to set the economy on course.

Who is sponsoring these forums? A Committee formed only for that purpose, made up of trade unionists and NDP activists. We believe the labour movement has to take its demands into the Party. To join the many disaffected NDP members in a common struggle to make the Government accountable to its base. To restore the NDP as labour's voice and as a movement for social change.

Above all we believe that labour's presence within the NDP -- in ridings, at Provincial Council, and at meetings such as this -- affords la legitimate and necessary way to claim our Party back.

So join us on Tuesday, May 25. Post our flyer. Bring your fellow unionists. Let your voice be heard. Inside the NDP. Where it counts.

John Glenn Willie Lambert

John Glenn (Local 595, OPSEU), Willie Lambert (Local 1276, CAW)

The NDP Labour Fightback Committee, trade union caucus of
Forums for Socialist Alternatives in the NDP

For further information, contact:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fred Callahan (USW) | 462-0214 | Ben Pedersen (CUPE) | 769-7118 |
| Kevin Robertson (CBRT) | 531-6707 | Gord Doctorow (OSSTF) | 497-8039 |
| John Glenn (OPSEU) | 569-0507 | Willie Lambert (CAW) | 845-9303 |

(Union affiliation listed for identification purposes only.)

**P.S. JOIN US AT OUR NEXT TWO ORGANIZATIONAL MEETINGS:**

**Toronto Board of Education Building, 155 College Street at McCaul**
**7:00 p.m.**
**Wednesday May 19, in the Cafeteria**
**Thursday, May 27, Room 252**

STEVEN LANGDON, M.P.
ESSEX-WINDSOR

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
OTTAWA, CANADA
K1A 0A6

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE
5910 MALDEN RD.
MALDEN PLAZA
WINDSOR, ONTARIO
N9H 1S4
(519) 966-0856
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OTTAWA OFFICE
(613) 995-0603
FAX (613) 995-6444

May 27, 1993

Harry Kopyto
211 Dunvegan Road
Toronto, Ontario
M5P 2P3

Dear Harry,

Thank you very much for your communication of support which I received and read during the recent arguments and events in Ottawa around my comments, as an Ontario New Democrat M.P. (and as an economist), expressing serious concerns about provincial government economic strategy in Ontario, and urging Premier Rae to change direction before presenting his budget.

The debate on provincial economic strategy in Ontario is very important to pursue for New Democrats and citizens of the province and of the country. There are many supporters from the 1990 provincial election who question what is taking place. It is important to say that what Premier Rae and his cabinet decide in 1993 does not automatically represent what the New Democratic party stands for, in terms of values and beliefs.

Many Canadians believe the New Democratic party stands for primary emphasis on job expansion, a less heavy-handed approach to deficit cutting, concern to maintain not damage social programs, and a stress on environmental concerns.

I believe that. I believe we must keep working for a New Democratic party that consistently follows those goals. And I hope you will work yourself to try to move the New Democrats in that clear direction.

Thank you again for getting in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Langdon, M.P.

# DOVERCOURT NEW DEMOCRATS

*The Newsletter of the Dovercourt NDP Riding Association*

*June, 1993* *Vol. 3, No. 1*


# SOCIAL CONTRACT or SOCIAL "CON"?

***by Manfred Netzel***

Let me say from the outset that as a member of the broader public sector (not the civil service), the following remarks may not be very objective but are certainly heartfelt.

Ontario's (our?) New Democratic government is facing a severe revenue/tax crisis. The recent provincial budget is proof positive of that. Consequently, Queen's Park is seeking a **$6 billion** total reduction in Ontario's broader public sector spending in 1993-94. Two-thirds (or **$4 billion**) of this amount will be cut **without discussion** by the Treasurer. The remaining **$2 billion** reduction is subject to the so-called "social contract" negotiations which began in early April.

Although the term "**social contract**" dates back several centuries to the Enlightenment and philosophers like Rousseau and Locke, the process proposed by Bob Rae is unprecedented in recent political history. According to the Premier and his own chief negotiator, Michael Decter, three of the basic principles to this "window of opportunity" known as the Ontario Social Contract are:

- **Sharing of Economic Restraint by all Ontarians**
- **Protection of Public Sector Jobs**
- **Fairness to Public Sector Employees**

I believe that the sentiment behind these principles is admirable. However, the **true implementation** of these principles is naive and even deceptive. I hope to demonstrate this by discussing each of them.

## Sharing Economic Restraint by all Ontarians

There has **never** been an equal sharing of economic cutbacks by all Ontarians. Currently, there are over 30,000 businesses in Ontario that pay **no income tax.** At the same time, personal income tax revenues have increased to almost half of total provincial revenues, while corporate tax revenues have dropped to only seven per cent.

Commercial landlords are thrilled that the recent budget eliminated the Corporate Concentration Tax, a tax since 1989 on large office buildings and shopping centres. While individual income taxes will be increased **retroactively** to last January, the proposed minimum corporate tax will not begin until January 1994. In addition, increasing or widening the application of retail sales/consumption taxes, while cutting social spending, has always been seen as negatively affecting lower income people more than others.

## Protecting Public Sector Jobs

This principle is directly undermined by both the non-negotiable cutbacks and the social contract negotiations. Due to hospital cutbacks and governmental reorganization, thousands of health care workers and civil servants have already been laid off. The estimated "first-round" job loss in the civil service and broader public sector resulting from the $4 billion spending cuts is from **8,500 to 11,200 positions.**

In education, non-negotiable school board cuts are a two per cent "clawback" on operating grants, which the government itself estimates will result in an immediate job loss of **700 to 900 positions.** More importantly, the job cuts in education are taking place during a time of enrolment growth, particularly in the area of adult education. The social contract negotiations will include an **additional $520 million hit** on school boards and another **$170 million** for colleges and universities, with further proportionate job reductions.

## Fairness to Public Sector Employees

Finally, I have difficulty accepting the outcome of the third stated principle. By definition and by self-interest, the workers involved in the current social contract negotiations are as diverse in their income levels as they are in their skills or working conditions. Thus, any attempt to implement voluntary "equal sacrifices" upon salaries, benefits or pensions for members of the 30 or so unions, alliances, federations and associations represented in the Public Sector Coalition is doomed to failure.

Is a wage freeze fair? Will it mean the same to a $31,000 clerical worker as it would to a doctor? Is the impact of an unpaid day's leave a month the same for a municipal worker as for a school principal? Is a three-year deferral on cost of living allowances as important for a retiring employee as it is for a new employee? The inequities of any imposed wage control program are particularly clear in this situation. As always, those who are hardest hit **never recover their losses.**

I wish I could be more optimistic about the government's so-called social contract and its stated goal "to build on creative participation from the stakeholders by bringing government, employers, and employees together . . . and to maximize the number of measures that can be embraced voluntarily and arrive at outcomes that best reflect the interests of the parties." Would the Tories or Liberals do any better? **Of course not!** But then, we didn't work for <u>them</u> in the last election, did we?

*Manfred Netzel works as a teacher for the City of York Board of Education.*

***Any events coming up?***

***Let Dovercourt New Democrats know and we'll include them in Our Upcoming Events list next issue.***

# On to Gananoque!

June 1993

On May 21, 1993, the Ontario Federation of Labour issued a statement in support of Ontario's public sector workers. The statement contains the following passage: "The Ontario Federation of Labour calls upon the Provincial Council of the Ontario New Democratic Party to provide the appropriate forums for the Ontario New Democratic Party to demand the support of the Ontario government for the policies of labour's political party including, but not limited to, the right to bargain freely."

On June 19 and 20, 1993, the NDP Provincial Council will be meeting in Gananoque, Ontario. This is our chance to start taking the Party back.

It is urgent that each affiliated union local send its full compliment of delegates to this Provincial Council meeting (1 delegate per 1,000 local members). The Labour Caucus, which includes all trade union delegates present at the Council meeting, should meet regularly to make sure that the Council debates the Ontario Federation of Labour's statement and that it responds positively.

The Ontario Federation of Labour calls for "appropriate forums" to bring the Government into line with the Party's electoral program. We believe such forums can include an emergency conference, even a special convention fo the Party. A broad discussion inside the NDP will let us air our views and debate with the government the burning economic issues of the day. When the chips are down, the members of the ONDP will accept labour as its ally. And then, Bob Rae will have to listen.

In order to get this process going, we must make our presence felt inside the NDP. That means going to Gananoque and giving leadership and voice to all those in the NDP who believe in making the government accountable to the base of the Party and in making the government respect the policies that it ran on.

We therefore urge you to insure that all local executives of affiliated unions designate their full compliment of delegates to the NDP Provincial Council in Gananoque on June 19 and 20 as soon as possible. Let's take the Party back!

This appeal has been issued by: **Canadian Auto Workers, Local 1256**
**(Oakville Transit Workers)**

For further information, expressions of support or endorsations, contact William Lambert, CAW Local 1256 Chairperson, at (416) 845-9303.

# PROVINCIAL COUNCIL MEETING, JUNE 19-20, 1993

The Gananoque Provincial Council meeting held on June 19-June 20, 1993, reflected the ongoing domination of the Party by the Provincial Executive and also the influence and control exerted by the trade union bureaucracy and the Government bureaucracy over the structures of the Party.

## The Forces in Attendance

The Council itself was the most politicized and controlled that has ever taken place in recent memory. Observers, approximately 100 in numbers, were isolated from 310 delegates and 50 alternates behind a glass screen in the arena where the Council meeting was held. The meeting itself was held far away from membership centres in eastern Ontario which made it difficult for many persons to come who otherwise would, especially ordinary members of the Party. No tables were provided for displays by different groups as was usually the case in the past. Only one small entry onto the floor of the Council meeting was kept open. Members of Provincial Parliament who were not delegates or alternates were kept off this floor. Non-members of the Party were excluded. It was necessary to pass through three checkpoints to enter into the Council meeting itself. Persons who wanted to join the party so they could sit as observers were blocked from doing so by a requirement that they had to have their membership at least four days prior to the Council meeting. A motion at the beginning of the Council meeting restricted speakers solely to delegates thereby eliminating an earlier ruling which permitted alternates to speak when delegates had finished speaking. A systematic effort was made to ensure that "reliable" delegates from riding associations showed up in order to block radical activists from attending. A mock cemetery consisting of a hundred tombstones symbolizing Tory plant closures outside of the arena set the tone and reinforced the leadership's line that all of Ontario's problems stemmed from the federal Tories alone. All doors into the arena were blocked at all times to prevent demonstrators from coming in. No signs or banners were allowed inside the arena itself. Finally, several police officers and police cars were present at all times outside of the arena. Delegates and observers were told that if they shouted, they would be evicted from the meeting.

Another unusual feature of the Provincial Council meeting was the large number of labour leaders and delegates and the important role played by labour in the Council meeting. Among the labour leaders that were present almost all but one of whom were delegates were Leo Gerard, representative from steelworkers who continued to support Rae uncritically, Judy Darcy, head of CUPE, Liz Barkley, head of OSSTF, Sid Ryan from CUPE, Gord Wilson, President of the O.F.L., Linda Torney, head of the Toronto Labour Council and numerous other officials from trade unions and labour groups. Notably absent from the deliberations but prominent outside was Fred Upshaw whose Executive Board voted 12-5 under the influence of

Rappaport-Weisleder forces to bring OPSEU to support leadership review MOTION. Steelworkers and CAW both held caucuses before or during the meeting in order to line up their people. There was more union representation at this Council meeting than at any other Council meeting within recollection.

Among those in attendance were also a large number of government employees. People who do not normally come to Council meetings like Hugh O'Reilly, Chief of Personnel from Management Board and others similarly employed provided a large base of sycophantic uncritical supporters of the government who could be counted on to vote in support of whatever the Rae leadership wanted under almost any foreseeable circumstances.

In addition, there was a large number of Cabinet members and members of Parliament present. In addition, to dissident MPPs such as Drainville, Kormos and Morrow, there were several other members of Parliament including Caucus Chairperson Steve Owens, Cabinet Ministers such as David Cooke, Floyd Loughren, Jackie Lankin and even Attorney-General Marion Boyd whose position usually requires an arms-length distance to be kept from Caucus discipline and Party political activities. Even federal members of Parliament including Steve Langdon and Dan Heap attended the meeting. Finally, there was a significant layer of Party activists who also attended, though the distance from any urban centre and expense involved in attending at Gananoque ensured that their numbers was, in absolute terms, no larger and likely smaller than those who attended the March Council meeting, and proportionately likely smaller. It could be said without exaggeration that the leadership pulled out all stops in mobilizing its apparatchik base with large numbers of government employees with Party connections being present at this Council meeting.

Finally, there were a large number of demonstrators outside of the Council meeting organized by the public service unions which crescendoed to perhaps over 1,500 people by early afternoon. Arriving from various parts of Ontario in a demonstration organized by the Public Service Coalition, many of these demonstrators came from the teachers' federations including OSSTF, and OPSEU. They were excluded from the arena. There was a strong air of militancy in this demonstration with a considerable chanting focused on the getting rid of Bob Rae. There was no sense among these demonstrators that they could play a positive role within the NDP affect or intervene the deliberations that were taking place within the arena.

The Deal

The basic decisions that were made at the Council meeting reflected agreements and arrangements that had been made in the weeks preceding it. Both Rae and Wilson by correspondence had agreed with the Provincial Executive to recommend that the full first day

of the Council meeting be set aside to debate "the political and economic agenda of the Government". Plans to put the emergency resolutions over to Sunday morning when the meeting would be much smaller were changed to accommodate such resolutions Saturday afternoon immediately after Bob Rae's speech which would give the right-wing a strategic advantage in timing. The O.F.L. leadership, at a meeting held a week prior to Council, which had been conveniently rescheduled to another location with only selected observers being advised of the change of location and with attendance restricted to union local presidents, had decided to promote a watered-down resolution originating with the Public Service Coalition which affirmed the principle of collective bargaining without specifically calling for the rescission of the Social Contract Act passed one week prior to the Council meeting which, among other things, allowed the Government to reopen existing contracts in order to impose its rollbacks and wage freeze on to 950,000 Public Employees. The deal was to pass a resolution asking for the Government to refrain from interfering with collective bargaining rights and to negotiate with the unions representing public servants. The issue of what would happen if such negotiations did take place and if they failed to establish agreement by August 1, 1993, or by an extended deadline when the Social Contract Act is kicked in, was not addressed in the resolution. It was also agreed among the labour leaders with Wilson and Gerard working in tandem and the public servant leaders going along, that no challenge would be made to Rae's leadership, that resolutions calling for an emergency Convention would be opposed and no challenges would be made to the Government's direction other than that expressed in another section of the so-called compromise resolution which called upon the Government in general terms to lessen its emphasis on the deficit and put emphasis on job creation as well as two other very general Provincial Executive resolutions.

Dissent

The proceedings at the Council meeting throughout the day did reflect the existence of a significant degree of dissent within the Party. A number of speakers from the ranks of the Party spoke in defence of collective bargaining, addressed the impact of social service cutbacks on the unemployed, criticized the Government's emphasis on the deficit, spoke of the need to defend the Government's traditional program and expressed concern about the number of people leaving the Party. When Bob Rae intervened in the discussion from the podium from the front of the hall, shortly after others were required to line up at the mikes on the floor along with all the other delegates, there was a sharp rebuke for this privilege from the floor. Some of these criticisms were joined in by Sid Ryan and Judy Darcy, who, as delegates, spoke in defence of public services and against the Social Contract Act. The most passionate speech given at the Provincial Council meeting came from Steven Langdon who accused the Rae Government of tearing

"the heart out of the Party", attacked Loughren for being dishonest by telling business he was taking eight billion out of the economy and telling the Party membership that he was putting nine billion into the economy, criticizing the Government for undermining McLaughlin's possibilities on the federal level and finally attacking the leadership for "destroying the Party". This message was reinforced by Langdon when he posed the need for a leadership change if Rae ignored the Resolutions at the next Provincial Council meetings in a radio interview the day following the conference. However, despite these interventions, there was no real sense that a discussion was taking place. Most delegates had come "full and frank" lined up behind the Government. These delegates bore a strong sense of defensiveness of the Government leadership and the basic line carried by Gord Wilson and other official labour leaders was to the effect that the real enemy was the Tories, that whatever criticisms we had of the Government, these were basically differences within the family and that New Democrats continued to be united and supportive of the Government. There were suggestions that economic recovery was on its way and that the cutbacks were inevitable so that it would be better that they were enforced by an NDP government rather than by a Tory or Liberal government.

The dissident and left elements at the Council meeting were relatively few. The Left Caucus meeting attracted only 18 or 19 people of whom only three or four were new persons. It should be noted that 500 leaflets were distributed to announce the Left Caucus meeting supporting the emergency convention. There were large regional caucuses, however, taking place during the lunch break which attracted most activists and many people who normally come to Left Caucus meetings so that this significantly affected attendance at our meeting. The fact that many persons chose to attend those meetings rather than ours however reflected the lack of a sense of struggle and the absence of any possibility of overcoming the leadership's control of the Council meeting at Gananoque. It should also be noted that Bill Signal, President of Plumbers Local 46, continued to have an overly optimistic sense as to the likelihood of success of his resolution believing that he would get support from CUPE and other unions for his Local's resolution calling for an emergency convention. Signal had expressed the opinion at an earlier meeting that the trade union delegates could be persuaded to vote for an emergency convention on the basis that their own jobs would be on the line.

Less than 25% of voting delegates were free from direct control and ~~that~~ the role of the Left at this Council meeting was relatively limited. Overall, there was a sense that the leadership was able to get away with its efforts to make the Gananoque Council meeting appear to be an open and democratic debate within the Party.

from the Youth Provincial Section, from Brantford, from Toronto, from Ottawa, Windsor, Lanark, Richtown, Maitland, from the Retail Workers' Union, the CAW, Brampton, Gananoque, St. Catherines, Hamilton, Essex and Hamner (a total of 23 people).

The Provincial Council meeting had the following results. For the Government itself, it avoided the possibility of a challenge to its leadership, blocked the next Convention to a date seven months after it was due so that no challenge could be organized to Rae, diffused a potential challenge from labour ranks so that the Government could have a free hand to impose its Social Contract Act by August 1st or after another Government imposed deadline and provided a phony show of unity to the media behind Rae.

For the Party Executive, it was able to play the role of broker, putting forward general resolutions which required no concessions from the Government at present but which enabled the Party Executive to retain its own image of independence, distance and criticism of the Government and reinforced the false dichotomy that the distinction between Party and Government was such that they could continue in their own separate ways.

For the trade union leadership they came out of the Council meeting with a resolution which they could present as a victory for public service workers but which would have virtually no impact on Rae's offensive against public workers.

For the Left, it reflected an opportunity to test the waters and make some contacts. The Council meeting also legitimized dissent more than ever before with people like Langdon and Darcy and Ryan participating actively in harsh criticism of the Government.

Finally, despite these victories for the labour and Party bureaucracy, the Council meeting only postponed the inevitable differences which are bound to reassert themselves in time by barely papering over the widening gap of differences between the public sector unions and the NDP Government leadership.

At such time, the Left, despite its being on the defensive and playing an apparently peripheral role at Gananoque, as in the past, is likely to reemerge at such a time as a force that continues to raise the critical demands that reflect the growing disaffection at the broad base of the Party and the desire for participating in the rebirth of the Party. It has done so on issues of accountability, public membership of auto insurance, Sunday work and the defence of Quebec's self-determination during the referendum campaign. It was the first to promote the CAW's critique of the NDP Government and call for a wide discussion within the Party. It will also be part of those who will lead the battle for an emergency convention in the post-Gananoque future.

The reason we can be sure that there will be significant struggles ahead and new openings for the Left include the following:

The growing pressure from the public service workers on their leaders to come up with solutions to the economic offensive of the Rae Government, the first steps being taken by some locals, such as 199 in Oshawa, the Oakville transit workers, CAW local, etc. too back the leadership and solidarize with the public servants, the shift to the left among a few but not many riding activists including some important persons such as Watkins who has called for a labour socialist alliance and others, the growing disillusionment that will occur when the economic recovery that Rae promises exists ends up not materializing and even if it were to materialize, incapable of creating jobs, the impending rout of the federal Party which will be attributed to the Rae Government and which will shake the confidence in the Rae leadership of the p
Parliamentary wing of the Party and the upcoming decision of Rae to impose the Social Contract Act which will put the O.F.L. leadership in a position where it can no longer come out with rabbits from its hat and where its total subservience to Rae and inability to challenge him politically will become evident to secondary union leaders. This situation will open up new possibilities for the labour socialist alliance called for by Watkins.

***Presenting the THIRD of three forums addressed to New Democrats, trade unionists and social activists***

# Implementing our Program in Power

**Gordon Doctorow,** Co-chair, NDP Left Caucus

**An Ont. Fed. of Labour representative** has been invited.

**An NDP Prov. Executive representative** has been invited.

## *Saturday, June 26, 2:00 p.m.*
## *Toronto Bd. of Ed. Auditorium*
## *155 College Street, Toronto (at McCaul)*

***Admission by Donation***

***Sponsored by Forums for Socialist Alternatives in the NDP***

# WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NDP?

***Left on the defensive***

For many years, the left in the NDP was put on the defensive by accusations that it was overly ideological. At convention, riding and Provincial Council meetings, we were made to feel Taldumic, even intimidated from saying what we knew was right by a sense that we were impractical, unrealistic, harmful to the Party, almost like intruders at a party who were spoiling a good time.

When the NDP was elected in September, 1990, this fear of being marginalized by our emphasis on the fundamental principles of socialism--democratic economic planning, production for use instead of profit, public ownership of the productive wealth of our country-- was magnified one thousand fold. After all, didn't the NDP get elected under the leadership of pragmatist Bob Rae? Didn't this show that the options before the NDP were wide and various, and that leftist ideologues had to let the leadership stay in the driver's seat, for a while at least withholding judgement? The NDP's electoral success muted the left, though deep in our hearts, we knew that history would absolve us, to borrow a phrase from the 1960's.

Unfortunately, we didn't have to wait for long. No matter how much we try to get away from it, the fact remains that the biggest mistake that the CCF-NDP made was to dump the Regina Manifesto. Virtually every single political mistake of significance that the Government has made resulted from its abandonment of a vision of an alternate society that would put people before profit and democratic economic planning before the chaos of an unregulated market. Its break from the traditions of the Regina Manifesto, from the perspectives of J.S. Woodsworth and Agnes McPhail, of William Irvine and Tommy Douglas, left the Ontario Party without a rudder, pressured by the powers that be to do their bidding at the expense of the public interest. Though public service workers are paying the biggest price right now for this breach of our traditions, the cost of abandoning our roots has also eroded the NDP's credibility among every other social sector that has ever identified with our Party. Despite all this, the message the left must bring to the remaining ranks of the NDP, and also to those who have walked away from the Party in disgust, is really not different from what we have had to say in the past: only socialism can steer the NDP back on course.

***Is it a question of leadership?***

Some on the left who focus primarily on the leadership issue fail to see that it is only a small part of the total picture. The problem with the NDP leadership, or Bob Rae for that matter, is not that it is incompetent or weak or that it was always prepared to sell the NDP out. The crisis of the NDP's leadership is rooted in its ideology and not in its personal composition.

Look what happened when we took office. The international economic forces that are behind the erosion of Ontario's manufacturing industry left the NDP Government two choices--move aggressively towards socialism or attempt to manage a welfare capitalist economy in a state of pending crisis. Not only Bob Rae, but the entire NDP cabinet, failed to promote a vision of extending the public domain into the heights of the economy through a democratic plan under public control. Not a single Member of Provincial Parliament spoke in favour of keeping runaway U.S. plants operating, where viable, under public ownership when there was a local market to be met. No one spoke for government initiatives to establish

industries to produce products suited to Canadian consumers. No one talked in favour of planning our economy to meet our own internal market, producing pollution free, fuel-efficient cars suited to our environment, permafrost structures in the far north, snowmobiles, insulation and similar products designed for Canadian needs.

***Drifting to the right***

These options were not considered viable by the NDP Government or its leadership. The reasons go back to ideology, not the nefarious qualities of any person or group. For years, the NDP leadership had been speaking less and less of public ownership and democratic planning. Even though it was catapulted into power by a rise in expectations that the NDP would break with the corruption that mired the provincial Liberal Party and take bold measures to implement its Agenda for People Program of reforms, the leadership of our Party had already become wed to the idea that private industry was the engine of economic growth. Accepting this premise, the Government's essential role was seen as preserving a high rate of profit for business interests. This would then generate the jobs, spinoff industries and economic activity needed to revitalize the economy. In time, social programs would multiply and everyone would benefit. But first and foremost, the interests of private business had to be protected in order to ensure such a recovery.

Hence, the NDP Government set course on a path which it has yet to abandon. Algoma, DeHavilland, Consumers' Gas, Caterpillar--in instance after instance, private industry had its way. Oh yes, there were concessions, compromises, a willingness to sacrifice and all that good stuff that Bob Rae talks about. But it was all within the framework of the status quo--a limited version of welfare state capitalism. The only problem was that this model of social organization was undergoing a severe crisis everywhere in the world because of increased competition and shrinking markets. There was no way welfare capitalism could be made to work in Ontario in the early 1990's. It was thus the Rae leadership that was Utopian while socialists in the Party went offering practical solutions.

But this course, chosen by the cabinet, had its own logic, which pushed the NDP further and further to the right. The abandonment of public auto insurance, the sanctification of Sunday work, the legalization of casinos and finally, the Social Contract Act were part of this inexorable pattern. Once the premise that capitalism could be made to work was accepted, no political principle could be allowed to stand in the way of clearing the deck for private capital.

***No mobilization***

This perspective reflects, as well, a perception that a government in power can peacefully reshape the institutions of state power to serve whatever interests it chooses without involving the population in implementing and defending its program. The government bureaucracy, the upper echelons of the public administration, the police, courts, government boards and professional elites that dominate Ontario, were seen as neutral instruments that a competent government could use to achieve its goals, whatever they might be. The NDP Government sought to use these instruments in a more humane and caring way than previous administrations. Instead of revitalizing all these institutions with the new forces that helped elect the NDP, from top to bottom, too often there were only cosmetic changes at the most visible levels. Left untouched were the hierarchies that dominate government institutions, with the insolence, contempt and disdain that they show for working people completely intact. The base of

the Party was never mobilized to defend its program the way that big business mobilized its forces and resources against the Government. Many NDP policies were watered down in implementation by a hostile or reluctant bureaucracy making a mockery of our original electoral program.

And now, post mid-term, we are awash in a sea of hostility, having destroyed our trade union base, lost our credibility, encouraged the most conservative elements at other levels of government and are still awaiting the accolades from the business interests, who still think we have not gone far enough.

***The alternative of socialism***

Against this pragmatism of the NDP Government's leadership, which accepted the social relations of capitalism as capable of meeting human need, an alternate vision could have been posed. There is even now, at this late date, a choice, a path that leads us back to the future, which reunites us with our roots and synthesizes a perspective that could inspire the membership and win back the electorate.

The chaos in our economy, plenty amidst poverty, a "jobless recovery", are not inevitable. It does not make sense to have farmers driven off the land when hundreds of thousands can't afford food, when profitable plants like Caterpillar in Brampton and G.M. in St. Catherines located near market centres are dismantled to be reconstructed in the southern United States or Mexico while highly-skilled productive Canadian employees are thrown into the streets. It does not make sense to have plants lie idle when Toronto has 20,000 persons wandering the streets of Toronto without shelter. It does not make sense to target public workers and social services, education and health, while the banks proclaim hundreds of millions of dollars of profits.

Just as the systematic undermining of the industrial base of Ontario is not an accident but a part of a planned restructuring designed to consolidate operations where profits can be made most easily and where markets are closest, so too we need a plan to take control of the economy in the interest of production for our own markets. This can only be realized on the most thorough-going democratic basis. This means community control over our neighbourhoods and our local institutions. It means workers' control and self-management at the workplace, coordinated through elected representatives at the local, regional and federal levels of every industry and sector. And it means ongoing citizens' control over elected government representatives. We need a strategic vision of a planned economy in which each sector is integrated with each other and through which the working people of Ontario will control their economic fate.

*Can capitalism be reformed?*

Our current economic crisis shows that capitalism is incapable of balancing supply and demand, capacity and need, human ingenuity and social priority on its own, any more than Stalinism could. The haphazard destruction of our economy by "free" market forces has resulted in massive unemployment, wasted resources, deepening divisions on the basis of sex, race and class, and devastation to our environment. The market has proven to be a barrier not only to fulfilling human needs, but ultimately to human existence. Hundreds of thousands of jobless Canadians are ultimately the result of discord in the "free labour market," ruled by the brutally efficient law of supply and demand. And at what cost in human suffering! As a recent report released by the Canadian Mental Health Association points out, "As the jobless rate increases, so does the rate of depression, anxiety, self-deprecation, fatalism, anger, spouse abuse, suicide, homicide,

sexual assaults, property crimes, divorce and alcoholism".

The crisis that the current situation in the NDP poses for the labour movement is not one that can be solved by a mere change of leadership, especially in the absence of an alternative to Rae. The labour leadership itself was instrumental in placing Bob Rae into office both as leader of the NDP as well as into government, and someone else that we could support to replace him would not necessarily be more loyal to working people than Rae has been. The problem is that our labour leaders failed to challenge his ideology and even defended Rae and his autocratic leadership style from criticism by the left. They ensured that resolutions critical of the early retreats of the NDP Government on a wide variety of issues were not adopted at conventions. As recently as at the last provincial convention, the labour leadership supported resolutions opening up the Party to corporate donations and blocked a resolution that would have made the leadership directly accountable to the Party.

***The road ahead***

The weak forces on the left within the Party cannot take on its administration--the extensive party apparatus--on their own. Within the Party there exists a highly defensive attitude that if we do not hang together, we will hang apart, which the leadership draws on to rally the troops whenever needed. In the final analysis, just as the present leadership of the NDP was shaped by the labour movement which elected it to power, this same labour movement, with its vast resources, organic links to the NDP and influence, both potential and real, at every level of the Party, can help reshape its direction. *To date, it has spoken of doing it but has not done so.* While labour has not abandoned the NDP for any other political party or in favour of a new party, it now faces the possibility of being divided between more conservative forces who continue to support the Government; albeit, somewhat critically, and those who have walked away from the provincial Party in disgust, deciding to sit out the next period of political activity. Whichever tendency within the labour leadership predominates, both alternatives fail to address the urgent need to revitalize the Party from the bottom up, to imbue it with the militancy and determination of the rank and file of the labour movement and to focus its programme on socialist measures as we near the end of our term of office.

To do so, however, would require a mobilization around clear class demands tied to a vision of a socialist democracy. We need to promote a democratically determined economic plan with socially determined priorities, where workers, communities and government can jointly manage the economy. We need a vision of a social system in which reckless profiteering is replaced by production for use and surplus wealth generated by increased productivity would be used to benefit society through a reduced work week rather than bloating the profits of U.S. corporations. Even at the provincial level, the Ontario Government could use the Province of Ontario Savings Office to generate the capital needed to protect ourselves from the threats of international bankers to raise interest rates and boycott investments, thereby eliminating the worst threat posed by the deficit. It is thus that we can reassert a clarity of vision and commitment to principle and struggle that has won the NDP, and before it, the CCF, respect over several decades among working people.

This alternative is not academic. When the NDP was elected it took office, not power. Socialism remains the burning need of the moment. Either the labour movement ensures that the NDP moves forward with a socialist programme, or we watch the Party that we helped create and elect consume itself by destroying the roots and traditions and visions that gave it life to begin with. The choices are stark. The course is clear. The time to act is now.

**** How should working people be represented politically?

***** What political role for labour and socialists in the next election?

***** What should we vote for?

The second theme of the conference deals with the thrust and content of the demands which the left should advance to solve the crisis:

***** What programme should the left be putting forward to defend the interests of working people--employed and unemployed--and those adversely affected by big business rule?

***** Are reforms possible? Are they enough?

The third theme addresses the prospects for solving the organizational crisis of the socialist movement:

*****What strategies to rebuild the politics of the left and labour movement?

*****How can socialists reach out to women, the unemployed, students and oppressed minorities in order to unify their struggles and articulate clear demands?

*****Can the conference be a springboard for a broader discussion in the future?

We want this conference to be open, focused and democratic, inclusive of all persons who share a pro-labour and pro-socialist perspective. Our goal is to elect a representative steering committee which will adopt the goal of organizing similar activities in the future in order to continue the dialogue which we hope will take place at this conference.

If you are disillusioned with the NDP, if you are fed up with the inaction of the official Wilson leadership of the O.F.L., if you are searching for a synthesis that takes you beyond your area of activism, if you are interested in melding the evolving theories of socialist democracy with a strategy to implement these ideas in practice in their Canadian context, attend our conference. We need your input.

To help plan, build and endorse this conference, contact.

SPONSORED BY FORUMS FOR SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES

**FORUMS FOR SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVES IN THE NDP**
**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD JULY 22, 1993**
**MEETING COMMENCED AT 8:30 P.M.**

**ATTENDANCE:** 12 persons present

**MINUTES:**

Minutes of meeting held July 8, 1993, adopted.

**CKLM:**

CKLM wanted somebody from the Forums Committee to participate in a panel discussion on the future of the NDP Saturday afternoon. **MOTION CARRIED** that Harry Kopyto be authorized to participate.

**FURTHER DISCUSSION ON CONFERENCE:**

Gord Doctorow prepared a report in which he started with the differences expressed at the last meeting regarding whether or not we should have an explicitly socialist or a broader and more all-inclusive conference which would appeal to all persons with an anti-capitalist perspective whether socialist or not. In thinking about the two alternative approaches, it became apparent that the real possibilities of a social/economic alternative to Rae within the framework of the capitalist system did not exist whatever. It was therefore necessary to focus on an alternative vision to a capitalist society in order to pose any real, meaningful alternative to the direction Rae was taking Ontario.

In this regard, note should be taken that there has been a broad "dislocation" within the Left in general which has taken place with the rightward drift of the NDP government. Environmental activists, social activists, Black activists and ex-radicals such as those around the "Trib" signify the ongoing need for an alternative perspective and the viability of giving them a focus. Socialism has become legitimate once again in this circle but remains unfocused for activists in groups like the Trib which represent broader forces than the CP and who have recently picked up endorsements and supports from individuals as diverse as Buzz Hargrove, Leo Panitch, Lennox Ferrell and Judy Rebick. Of all the social groups, only one has gone through a decisive experience with the NDP in which the weakness of the Party's policies have become crystal clear and a perspective of opposition has been imbedded in a radical direction--the labour movement.

However, a closer look must be taken of the way that the labour movement has responded. The labour leadership by and large has carried on its fight with the NDP on the Social Contract Act in the media alone. The membership has not been mobilized or educated and a mobilization of the public or the union membership has not been in the cards. Much of the radical verbiage has been part of a

campaign to win concessions from the NDP leadership through what amounts to, so far, empty threats. However, the deals inside the NDP including the compromise resolution at Gananoque, which was stillborn shows that there is no real practical possibilities of getting a compromise with the NDP Government.

The labour movement clearly is not going to take its fight any further inside the NDP. In addition, the riding associations remain depleted, empty shells in too many instances. Many activists have gotten "out of the way" leaving loyalist elements in control. Resistance, if this is the right word to describe opposition to the drift of the Government, has been minimal. The Provincial Council itself has been pushed too and reached its limits. The "Solidarity Forever" mentality, the sense that if we do not hang together we will hang separately and our experiences over the past few Council meetings have shown the limited utility of this political structure.

The problem therefore remains as to how to transform conditions within the NDP. The series of forums which we held constituted a valiant attempt to promote a perspective of winning the NDP back to its roots, of developing a fightback strategy within the NDP and of promoting a long-term, gradual perspective of getting the Party back on course. As a result of this effort, we were able to make some important connections with dissidents and to revitalize the Left within the NDP, but only to a limited extent. Our connections with the labour movement in particular have put us in touch with persons at local and lower levels of the labour echelon. Though past progressive leaders like Hargrove have correctly identified the problem and even analyzed it and promoted an alternative program, they have made it clear that they are not prepared to move with the Left within the NDP. By and large, the social activists within the NDP have not gone through the process of clarification needed to sustain a strategy of winning back the Party and to develop and access the NDP to force their critical issues to be raised and mobilized around.

It therefore is becoming apparent that we have reached a stage where such a strategy cannot be implemented. It is not the time to put all our "eggs in the NDP basket". The labour movement is both inside of and outside of the NDP. If we were to focus on a fightback strategy at this period, we would inevitably be substituting ourselves for forces that have not now emerged and are highly unlikely to emerge in any event. For the labour movement as a whole, there has been a general withdrawal and disillusionment with the NDP. This disillusionment has taken form along class lines with some of the same forces that have traditionally identified and supported Rae such as President Gord Wilson of the OFL still playing a supportive role to Rae while more progressive elements around Hargrove raising demands posing the need for shorter work week in negotiations and around Jim Turk opposing the Ontario Training Adjustment Board (OTAB) seeking to implement

"quality of work life" programs which would integrate workers into management schemes.

With this understanding in mind, continuing a forum program for discussion within the NDP and posing socialist alternatives within the NDP would lead towards us attempting to substitute ourselves for labour forces in the NDP which are not now taking on the NDP leadership. A conference therefore that we would organize should go beyond the NDP and pose the need to focus on socialist alternatives.

Gord Doctorow suggested that one person who could be invited to speak would be Toronto Star columnist Thomas Wolkom who could be invited as a guest journalist. His consistent articles in the Star criticizing the Rae Government from the Left have received widespread support from disaffected NDPers and will give a focus to the conference that will take it beyond the NDP. In addition, the participation of Steve Langdon would also be important. Though not a socialist, because he has split with the NDP Government on its fundamental perspective, he would have an attraction both to persons outside of the NDP who have written off the present Government as well as forces still remaining within the NDP who want to challenge Rae. Finally, while we are unlikely to obtain the cooperation or support, at least initially, of people like Hargrove and Darcy, we likely will be able to obtain participation from lower level echelon labour figures whose presence at our conference would help to round it out.

Hans Modlich spoke next. He indicated that he had given the matter some thought after the last meeting and had come around to feeling that there was merit in the position advanced that the conference should be all-inclusive rather than simply limiting itself to a socialist focus. He expressed the view that such a latter conference could end up simply involving ourselves speaking to ourselves. He said that he did not want a conference which was along the lines of a Socialist Challenge conference or a limited conference which would not attract any new forces. He felt that we would eventually have to try to build the kind of support for a broad conference which could attract somebody like Steve Langdon to get involved without which the conference would likely end up being very limited and inward turned.

Lois Bedard spoke next stating that while she generally agreed with the perspective put forward by Gord Doctorow, that it was necessary to be very concrete in advertising and promoting the conference, even pragmatic and that the success of the conference in promoting a socialist counter-perspective flowed from our ability to focus on the issues and pose the concrete questions that the conference would deal with. In other words, the themes were key. By posing the issues in a clear way identifying the critical points raised by the welfare reforms, by the issues of pay equity and employment equity as they appeal and affect women, etc., it would be possible

to have a clear programmatic focus for the conference with a potential for broader involvement. Joyce Rosenthal made the point that perhaps what Gord Doctorow was posing was really a regroupment of the revolutionary left groups such as the C.P., S.C. and I.S.. She said that it was obvious that the U.S.W. ran the Guananoque Provincial Council meeting and that Robert White was behind moving out of the NDP. She asked whether what Gord was posing was really a regroupment outside of the NDP of all other left forces.

Helen Rosenthal generally expressed agreement with Gord's report. She felt that such a conference could promote a group which could lobby and pose issues and exert influence both inside and outside the NDP from a socialist perspective.

Victor Grange spoke next emphasizing the importance of being concrete and posing the conference in dealing with the specific issues involved. He emphasized that what was most important was the end result of the conference itself which would come up with programmatic demands within the framework of socialist transformation rather than the explicitness of the Call. As long as the issues were posed concretely with appeal to the different constituencies, such a conference could attract a wide number of people even though its end result will be helping to develop a socialist program.

Harry Kopyto pointed out that what was involved in the conference was more than a regroupment of existing left forces. He pointed out how, in terms of emphasizing all-inclusiveness, there was nothing more "all-inclusive" than the NDP itself. The problem therefore was lack of clarify not the fear of excluding anyone.

Gord spoke again emphasizing once again that the perspective of challenging the NDP leadership within the structures of the NDP had clearly failed. He emphasized that the leadership was now quite out of touch with reality. He pointed out that the two aspects of accountability that the left had fought for over the years which emphasized the accountability of the leadership to implement the program of the Party and the responsibility of the membership to support the leadership in its fight to implement such a program was a lost and defeated position and argument. The only time that the NDP leadership had mobilized any forces or that the membership had been able to mobilize behind the NDP Government was on the issue of Use of Force reports which resulted in Ontarians for proper policing mobilizing behind the Party. However, this was an isolated incident and by and large activists within the Party had become exhausted. A group of people had become "footloose" and responsive and we could build an alternative with them though not necessarily within the narrow framework of sending them back with a perspective of fighting the NDP leadership.

Gord agreed with the importance of posing the issues in a very concrete way explaining that the keynote forums could be used to

highlight the presence of various speakers who would set a broad tone for the conference, the workshops could be used to enable activists to clarify the specific programmatic demands along socialist lines and the organizational meetings at the conference could be used to enable various forces active on various issues and organizations to replenish their forces and restructure themselves such as the Left Caucus. The eventual production of position papers on various programmatic aspects of the different issues would enable the left to emerge with a broad perspective. Thus, through a combination of using the keynote speakers, the topics for various forums and the opportunities to restructure organizations, the conference could be shaped to have a certain clear focus. With forums such as those involving Hoskin and Watkins commenting on economics, with keynote speakers like Wolkom and Langden and with workshops which would enable the detailed working out of a socialist program, the conference could end up not being overly narrow and allow all participants to be involved.

Lois once again emphasized the need to have the right themes for the conference. Gord pointed out that what was involved was not necessarily putting together a coalition of various groups as Joyce suggested might be happening such as the CP, NDP and SC and IS and a narrowing of the focus of the left but rather a broadening it out to forces right now which were unsure and unclear where to turn to.

Hans spoke once again taking about the importance of insuring that the conference would at least be able to tap into the broad milieu that we wanted to make contact with and that we had difficulty making contact with in the past. He emphasized the difficulties that we have had getting other persons to participate with us in the past and the importance of attempting to be realistic. It was still more likely that a conference that involved alternative perspectives would be broader and easier to build than one with a more limited focus. Harry pointed out that he would sooner have a conference of 75 people focusing in on socialist issues rather than one of 250 focusing in on non-socialist issues (if there were a milieu to sustain such a broader conference which he felt could not happen) in light of the fundamental need for programmatic clarification resulting from Rae's lack of programmatic clarification. We could no longer go back to the Agenda for People program but move forward to socialism or retreat into the Agenda of the Corporations and the NDP Government.

Following further discussion, it was agreed that the Steering Committee should meet next Wednesday and that Hans Modlich would prepare a draft call that could be endorsed by other persons. Harry raised the possibility that we can contact some persons who we know are generally very close to us such as Michael Shapcott, Lennox Ferrell, Leo Panitch and perhaps even Mel Watkins and others in order to get feedback from them for the wording of the Call. It was decided that these issues should be left to the Steering Committee which will be meeting next Wednesday at Ann Emmett's

place subject to its availability at 7:30 p.m. Lois emphasized the importance of setting forth the key themes in an educational fashion in the conference call.

It was agreed that we would have our next meeting two week from today's date.

**REPORT ON THE DEMOCRAT**

It was pointed out that there was an article in the current issue of The Democrat, somewhat dated, by Lois Bedard and Harry Kopyto.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

An OPSEU picnic taking place Saturday was announced.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

ALTERNATIVE '93 — Which Way Forward for the Canadian Left?





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Toronto M4S 1J9, 484 7475
FAX (416) 484-4300

~~ALTERNATIVE '93 - Which way forward for the NDP~~ Socialism and the Labour Move

What are the alternatives open to the Left in Ontario now that Bob Rae and nearly the entire Caucus have embraced the rationale, if not the letter, of the corporate agenda?

Rae's social contract legislation is a bodyblow to the "distinct ideology based in the working class" for which Sam Gindon makes an impassioned plea in a recent CAW convention policy blueprint *Hard Times, New Times: FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE.*

*"Maintaining and developing our own independent ideology is today as important - or more so - than it ever was. Without it, we have no compass, no sense of direction, no protection of getting absorbed in the agendas of others. Much of the attack on us today is about destroying the idea that our values and their accompanying dreams are still relevant. The 'common sense' being put forth is that of course other things matter, but competitiveness comes first. And we know where that leads."*

A party -- especially one based on the social and union movements like the NDP -- is in deep trouble when it loses its direction and ideals.

How do we stem this ~~hemorrhaege~~ haemorrhage of the most committed, idealistic ~~and least opportunistic~~ members and affiliates?

Is it not necessary for all of us in the broader left ~~to circle our wagons, to get into a huddle,~~ to face and attempt to come up with some answers to penetrating and often disconcerting questions?

We would like to explore with you the possibility of building towards a broadly based teach-in style of conference to develop and articulate policy alternatives for all those who have been affected by the social contract, whether in the pocket book, whether private or public sector unions, or in the NDP or in the social movements in the community at large.

Such an event would serve the following purposes:

- as a signal that all those who spoke out in opposition to the S.C. legislation are continuing to formulate an alternative set of policies.

- as a rallying point to stand in the way of the continued right-ward drift of the party, and the bleeding away of its membership, program and ideological base, long after the Aug 1st deadline has come and gone.

- as a learning process, to try to understand and analyze and counteract the forces and the pressures acting on the Left in

*Reaction to neo-conservative Rae*

# New directions for the left

By Carla Lipsig-Mummé

THIS HAS been a terrible summer for progressive politics in Ontario. Not just for the public sector unions, whose fragile solidarity has been torn apart by the bitterness of having their party play each off against the rest, leaving them with Hobson's choices from which neither public sector trade unionism nor collective bargaining will emerge intact.

Nor just for the community and equity groups, who expected so much of the provincial NDP, but who have had to come to terms with its cynicism.

Nor just for the biggest of the industrial and service unions, who, torn between their traditional support for labor's party and their unexamined resentment of the public sector, finally sent leader after leader to bring Bob Rae to see how much more was at stake than his perception of the deficit, and found themselves powerless before the bland wall of his political inexperience.

What is at stake is the fabric, the future, of working class and community politics in Ontario and perhaps throughout English Canada.

Rae and his loyalists would have us believe that no issue is more important than reducing the deficit immediately, and that his method of deficit reduction will help rather than cripple economic renewal.

In fact, evidence from other provinces, such as Quebec, tell us that salary cuts imposed upon large segments of the working class rarely reduce the deficit permanently. But the damage wrought upon progressive politics can be permanent, and terminal.

By progressive politics I do not just mean the political voice of organized labor, but something broader: the political force composed of the unions, social movements like the women's movement, equity groups of the disenfranchised, community organizations, and a political party which speaks for them and with them.

Throughout the country, except in Quebec, the NDP has been the political voice of that community of ordinary citizens. In Ontario, until this spring, it continued to merit its name, bringing the unionized employed into a working coalition with the non-union, precariously employed, the unemployed and those who would otherwise be marginal to the political process.

This alliance, this polyglot voice, is what the Rae government's attack on the deficit has imperilled.

By any measure of political wisdom, Rae's attack upon the public sector unions is political suicide for the social movement and political party that the NDP was.

It has isolated NDP MPPs from their constituents, turned trade unionists against their party, made ordinary citizens fearful, put the federal NDP in an impossible and now tragic position, torn the provincial NDP apart internally — and, of course, ensured the NDP's defeat at the next federal and provincial elections.

There is no evidence that any other existing party can speak for the constituency the Ontario NDP has now abandoned.

IAN SMITH

Within the political community of labor, a debate now rages: Do we turn our back on the NDP, walk away from both its federal and provincial wings, or do we stick with the party and try to bring it back to what it used to stand for?

In reality there are three poles here, not two. A dangerous number of activists — the ones who make the NDP the community-based party it has been — have been so alienated by the Ontario government's neo-conservative conversion as to just walk away.

For these disillusioned activists the way forward is not clear. But if experience in other social democratic societies where the government has sold out the party is any evidence, the disillusioned will focus their energy and skills on thinking locally, on single issue campaigns in the workplace and community. They may disappear from electoral politics, although they will remain active in extra-parliamentary politics.

On the other hand, activists who are not willing to abandon the party divide roughly around two positions — very roughly because this is a volatile debate. Both agree that a loose, post-NDP coalition of community and labor alone will not give the NDP's constituency the political clout it needs. Both agree that when activists walk away from the party, they abandon all hope of retaining political leverage for social democracy in the middle distance.

A community-labor coalition without a party, they understand, is unlikely to win victories for grassroots, community-based social movements and may very well ensure another decade of conservative government.

Here, however, they divide.

One influential position within the labor movement argues that the priority is to rebuild the provincial NDP from within, to recapture it from its temporary leaders. They identify the problem of the Ontario NDP's neo-conservative turn as a hijacking, nothing deeper.

Another group, however, is asking harder, more troubling questions about the structure of the NDP itself, about rebuilding and changing the relationship between the party and its constituents.

This group is looking at other social democratic governments, discovering that the Ontario government's rightward turn seems to form part of an international pattern. It is asking what changes are necessary if a social democratic party, elected to govern a welfare-capitalist society, is to stay true to the basic outlines of its program.

The solutions this group is groping toward involve reconstructing the party while strengthening the political role of community and labor rank-and-file organizations.

For all these activists, the hardest job lies ahead: to rebuild the party and work through — in light of this saddest of failures — how to govern with social justice in an era of irresponsible business militancy.

In other words, how to rebuild the NDP in the image both of its beliefs and the chilly climate for social democracy. Starting over, starting now.

☐ Carla Lipsig-Mummé teaches labor studies at York University.

**LEFT CAUCUS OF THE ONDP**
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October, 1993

Dear Reader:

Enclosed please find a special edition of the *Left Caucus Newsletter*. It draws a balance sheet of the crisis within the Ontario NDP which has drained the Party of activists and funds and threatens the viability of the Party for years to come.

The Left Caucus of the Ontario NDP had attempted to stem the rightward drift of the Party from the beginning. At Provincial Council meetings over the last three years, as well as at riding meetings, we circulated position papers in defence of public ownership of automobile insurance, against casino socialism, in opposition to Sunday work and in favour of a constituent assembly during the constitutional referendum campaign. Last December, when Canadian Auto Workers' President Buzz Hargrove issued a sharp criticism calling upon the NDP to affirm its socialist direction and class character, we published a special edition of the *Newsletter* reprinting his speech and distributed four thousand copies at all major Party activities in southern Ontario.

When our efforts to organize a dialogue within the Party on its looming crisis were rebuffed this spring, we initiated, as part of the founding members of *Forums for Socialist Alternatives in the NDP*, a series of three public forums in the Toronto area, focusing on the deficit, cutbacks in social services and the future of the Party. Considering the exodus from the Party and the level of membership demoralization, these forums were well received, attracting media attention and participants from the trade unions, the academic milieu and the social movements. With limited resources and a great deal of enthusiasm, we were able to reach thousands of NDPers with a perspective of taking back the Party and returning it to its roots.

In the struggle to keep the Party in line with its nature as a movement for social change, we knew we were fighting a difficult struggle. We faced undemocratic procedures at Council meetings and apathy within the ridings. Even though we did not have the probability of winning, we considered it our obligation to take the initiative and rally our forces at the provincial council meeting in Gananoque and elsewhere to resist the erosion of the Party's character.

We are now challenged to provide a clear programmatic focus for reconstructing a socialist left that will include persons both inside the NDP as well as those who have left it. One of the projects we wish to support is a broad Ontario-wide socialist labour Conference of activists, whether NDP supporters or otherwise, who can come together to hear keynote speakers, hammer out their ideas in workshops and involve new forces in their activities.

Our bold efforts to intervene in the unfolding events have put us several thousands of dollars in debt. Our printer's bill alone is over $3,000.00. We have now reached a point where your generous financial assistance will decide if we are be able to meet the challenges of the future. We are unable to continue publishing the *Newsletter* unless we raise $4,000.00 in the next two months.

The need for the *Left Caucus Newsletter* has never been more urgent. There is a burning need to explain and defend socialism as the most immediate and practical solution to the urgent problems of the crisis of the capitalist economy. We believe we can be an important part of the reorientation of the left and labour movement which must involve a strategy to revitalize the ONDP as a political party of labour with a socialist program to transform our society. Please give what you can to make sure that the voice of socialism continues to be heard.

Sincerely,

Gord Doctorow Lois Bédard

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Co-Chairpersons
ONDP Left Caucus Steering Committee

proven so loyal that the United States Government does not seek nor need the formal loss of sovereignty by Canada with such sycophants to do their bidding.

With profit margins the primary criteria for all state decision-making, Canada's economic elite no longer pretends to maintain and defend what has made Canada unique and apart--its sense of solidarity, the commitment to a basic modicum of rights to health, education and security, the social values which reflect the cooperative spirit which built the wealth of this country in the first instance. On the contrary, the major thought-shaping institutions of our society, including the media and government, have unleashed a cacophony of deficit-cutting hysteria in the name of efficiency, realism, competition and free trade in a coordinated drive to take away from Canadians what they have strived for and achieved over decades.

The working people of Canada, daily experiencing the convulsions of an unstable Canadian capitalism descending into the arena of international trade wars as a satellite of the United States, are searching for answers. They are looking for solutions. They are ready for an alternative. In part, their yearnings have contributed to the fracturing of the Conservative Party, the rejection of an NDP perceived as the left-wing of the Liberal Party and a growing disillusionment, even cynicism, with politics. Yet in large numbers Canadians remain far from defeated or married forever to the right to whom they have turned because no one else was there. Canadian workers retain a sense of combativity, a desire to protect their unions, a

willingness to fight to maintain their gains, a continued commitment to control their own destiny as a society and as a country.

Only the vision of an independent, socialist Canada can become the banner to rally the victims of state-enforced and created austerity and planned unemployment. A bold vision of a Canada where Canadians share their productive wealth and financial resources for the betterment of humanity can counter the new, rapacious greed and consumerism engendered by a materialist, capitalist society. A clear program and vision of an independent and socialist Canada can reassert the values that historically gave the NDP and the CCF before it its broad and popular support among the dispossessed and hopeless and which united the best of each generation to fight for a cooperative society.

It is this same spirit of social solidarity, this same sense of oneness that gives labour unions and working people everywhere a sense of purpose beyond their isolated existence that the NDP must now tap into in order to reassert its presence as a relevant and dynamic political force. This it can only do by being as proud of its commitment to socialist democracy as the capitalist parties are of capitalism.

But more than this is needed. The NDP, from top to bottom, root and branch, leadership, membership and rank and file must implant itself in the social movements, both existing and nascent, to counter the erosion of our social and economic aspirations. We

must be an activist party that joins people in struggle day by day. New Democrats must be seen marching with the Native militants and not ordering them to jail, embracing the right of the Quebecois to freely determine their future in whatever form they choose rather than echoing the Canadian establishment and blurring our distinct image as we did during the Charlottetown Accord debates. New Democrats must open the doors of the Party wide to the women's movement instead of dismissing it as a "special interest group. We must embrace the environmental movement, the movements for sexual equality and the movements for human rights and become the voice for their rightful demands. Only then can the Party be infused with a renewed and activist vigour and re-establish its now weakened base among the social forces that yearn for social change. Ultimately, to transform Canada, the NDP must once again become the consistent voice of the labour movement, ditch parliamentary manoeuvres and regional interests when they stand in the way of protecting workers' solidarity and show the same political loyalty to the working class that the capitalist parties show to their corporate masters.

The road to revitalize the NDP is clear--it means making our Party active 365 days a year under the distinct banner of a call for an independent, socialist Canada. Only such a Party can return the NDP to its historic role. Only such a Party can regain the credibility that we had when we were seen and understood to be committed to our principles and able to offer a clear alternative to the destructiveness of capitalism.



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